

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PHNOM 02278 061147Z

12

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 /060 W

----- 052113

R 060640Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9233

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

USSAG NKP THAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 2278

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CB

SUBJ: KHMER NAVAL LOSSES, JANUARY 1 - FEBRUARY 6, 1975.

1. THE HEAVY FIGHTING AROUND PHNOM PENH DURING MUCH OF JANUARY, AND THE HEAVY LOSSES SUSTAINED BY BOTH SIDES THERE, TENDED FOR A TIME TO OBSCURE THE VITAL EFFORT OF THE SMALL, BUT HITHERTO EFFECTIVE KHMER NAVY (MNK). MNK IS COMPOSED OF BOTH A RIVERINE NAVAL FORCE AND A NAVAL INFANTRY ELEMENT (BFMS). THERE IS ALSO A "BLUE WATER" COMPONENT OF THE CAMBODIAN SEACOAST.

2. CONVOY SECURITY ON THE LOWER MEKONG IN THE PAST HAD BEEN ASSURED, NOT ONLY BY COORDINATED AIR COVER AND MNK SUPPORT ON THE RIVER, BUT ALSO BY THE PRESENCE OF A NUMBER OF SMALL BFM OUTPOSTS AT KEY POINTS ON BOTH BANKS. THESE OUTPOSTS WERE A PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF THE ENEMY BEGINNING ON JANUARY 1, AN ALL BUT TWO MNK POSITIONS WERE OVERRUN DURING JANUARY, WITH FAIRLY HIGH CASUALTIES TAKEN BY THE BFMS. A NUMBER OF THESE POSITIONS, BUT NOT ALL, HAVE SINCE BEEN REOCCUPIED BY FANK FORCES.

3. MEANWHILE, THE MNK RIVER CRAFT WERE BUSIER THAN EVER ESCORTING CONVOYS TO AND FROM THE IMPORTANT ENCLAVE OF NEAK LUONG, ON THE EAST BANK HALFWAY BETWEEN PHNOM PENH AND THE BORDER. MNK CRAFT AND CREWS SUS-
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PHNOM 02278 061147Z

TAINED CONSTANT AND HEAVY ATTACKS BY FIRE FROM THE

BANKS DURING THESE RUNS, PRIOR TO THE RESUMPTION OF THE EFFORT TO PUSH MAJOR CONVOYS UP FROM THE VIETNAM BORDER. TO DATE THERE HAVE BEEN FOUR OF THESE MAJOR CONVOYS ATTEMPTED UPSTREAM AND TWO DOWNSTREAM, WITH VARYING DEGREES OF SUCCESS, AS REPORTED ELSEWHERE, BUT ALL SUBJECT TO HEAVY ENEMY ATTACKS BY FIRE AND, MORE RECENTLY, TO ENEMY MINES.

4. CLEARLY, MNK IS INDISPENSABLE TO THE SOLUTION OF THE MEKONG CONVOY PROBLEM. BUT THE KHMER NAVY HAS BEEN PAYING A HEAVY PRICE FOR ITS EFFORTS ON THE RIVER. FOR THE JANUARY 1 - FEBRUARY 6 PERIOD, IT HAS TOTALLY LOST TEN RIVER CRAFT (3 RIVER PATROL BOATS, 2 ARMORED TROOP CARRIERS, 4 MEDIUM ARMED LANDING CRAFT, AND 1 MONITOR -- A CONVERSION OF A RIVER CRAFT CARRYING A 105 MM HOWITZER, AS A SORT OF FLOATING GUN PLATFORM). EIGHT ADDITIONAL RIVER PATROL BOATS ARE OUT OF COMMISSION AS A RESULT OF SERIOUS HULL DAMAGE. THE REMAINING INVENTORY COMES TO 146 COMBAT CRAFT, BOTH ON THE RIVER AND FOR COASTAL DEFENSE IN THE GULF OF THAILAND.

5. PERSONNEL LOSSES FOR THE SAME PERIOD, OB BOTH MNK AND BFM PERSONNEL, HAVE BEEN: 276 KILLED, 126 MISSING, AND 649 WOUNDED, A TOTAL OF 1,051 CASUALTIES IN A FORCE THAT NEVER TOTALLED MORE THAN 15,000 INCLUDING EVERY KIND OF SUPPORT, HEADQUARTERS, MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL, AND THE LIKE.

6. OBVIOUSLY, EQUIPMENT LOSSES ARE NOT GOING TO BE MADE UP IN ANY SIGNIFICANT QUANTITY, GIVEN PRESENT FUNDING CONSTRAINTS. AN EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANT CONCERN FOR THE NEAR FUTURE IS A DEGRADATION OF OPERATIVE CAPABILITY DUE TO SHEER EQUIPMENT FATIGUE, WHICH LIMITS EFFECTIVE USE OF THE REMAINING CRAFT TO 2/3 TO 3/4 OF THE 146 AT A GIVEN TIME. THE CONTINUING ATTRITION OF MNK AS AN EFFECTIVE FORCE IS A FACTOR WHICH MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN ASSESSING THE OVERALL COMBAT CAPABILITY OF THE KHMER ARMED FORCES.

DEAN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NAVAL FORCES, COMBAT CASUALTIES, MILITARY TRANSPORTATION, WATERWAY ACCESS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PHNOM02278
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750043-0911
From: PHNOM PENH
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750266/aaaachoa.tel
Line Count: 99
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 JUL 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <13 NOV 2003 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KHMER NAVAL LOSSES, JANUARY 1 - FEBRUARY 6, 1975.
TAGS: MOPS, CB
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006